



Results Of E-Learning, In Distance Learning Education With Evaluation Of Participants Feedback

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Abstract

During the education development international programmes organised by Department of Ecological Farming and Sustainable Production System of the Corvinus University of Budapest - three of the Leonardo da Vinci projects had been successfully closed with the aim of utilisation of e-learning education in distance learning of adult education in 14 modules of organic farming. The courses were developed for post secondary education, for advisers in organic agriculture and for farmers as well. After completing the courses the participants were asked to give a feed back about their opinion of the courses with filling a questionnaire composed by the members of the participating institutions about different aspects of content and quality of the courses.

Their feed back and opinion had been collected evaluated and served the improvement of the quality and organisation of the on line courses further on. In this article we give the results and the conclusion of the evaluation of the data collected from the survey of the on line course participants of the implemented Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects in Hungary.

1. Introduction

The Ecologica LdV Project

In the ECOLOGICA LdV (HU/05/B/F/PP-170018) project the goal was the development of the coordinated operation of Knowledge and Education Centres within the Partner Institutions and connection of them by way of the Internet (servers' network). Collection of a basis of organic farming knowledge on a joint server called Ecolibrary. [4]

The Knowledge Centres perform the dissemination of collected database for the potential advisers within the frame of an e-learning training courses based upon the mutually developed education material that would be adapted to the given ecological, technological, social, national and economic circumstances of the partners. [2]



Fig.1 Leonardo program ECOLOGICA project Homepage screenshot



The Project Partnership

The partners of the project besides the Department of Ecological and Sustainable Production Systems as co-ordinator; were: Estonian University of Life Sciences, in collaboration with the Estonian Organic Farming Foundation, Estonia; MÖGÉRT/AHOF Association for Hungarian Organic Farming, Hungary; University of South Bohemia in Ceske Budejovice Czech Republic; Latvian University of Agriculture, Latvia; Slovak Agricultural University Nitra, Slovakia; University of Maribor Faculty of Agriculture, Slovenia; Biocert Association, Naples, Italy.

The ITC experts of the project have developed e-learning platforms for each partner to perform the on line education, test courses and full courses were organised at partner institutions during the duration of the project.

The Targeted Audience of the Program

Targeted group of the project: graduates with an agricultural diploma for further education in ecological farming, graduates with a diploma for retraining and reorientation - no further limit of age, unemployed, having graduated within the agricultural sector

The Result of the Project

The results of the project were the adaptation of ecological farming education program for the advisers' education in organic agriculture. The partnership has developed data bank for work up e-learning training course of ecological farming advisers, and e-learning course had been composed, consisted of 14 modules within partner's institutions, on-line access system had been developed for the participating knowledge centres within the program. The method of operation is similar to the Linux system in computer science because it is an open system, and it is also flexible. Feedback is an important part of the operation.

The database was collected and created by, and used by the partners in their local knowledge centres on their own languages. (Presently in English and 7 languages of the partners [3])

The Operation System of the On-line Education

The new training method is operated by way of a module system, built upon each other, specialised for the graduation level of the participants [1] (high and medium level of modules). The training program lasted 1 week in each module. The teaching material was available online electronic version, within the knowledge centres of the partner institutions. The participating institutes contributed as knowledge centres and operate their own website to locally organise the education program.

Training of advisers was planned from 14 weeks to 6 months depend on the level of preliminary education. The participating adviser has got access to the online system and they have received the education material weekly and, examined by test, tasks controlled regularly by tutor. The students carried out and finished the training within a minimum of 14 weeks (at high level only). <http://hu.ecologica.net>, <http://www.ecologica.net>

The longest period for learning is 6 months for those who undertake the medium level modules of the training too (medium and high level). The graduated advisers have got certificate with reference to the training program.

The main topics of the questionnaire were related to the previous knowledge and experience about e-learning of the participants, the quantity and quality of the educated modules, the level of understanding of the thought materials, the difficulties of the educated materials, and the utilization of the knowledge in the actual workplace or in the desired new job.

Method of testing: connecting to the exams the questionnaire was obligatory filled by the participants at each Institution performing the education.

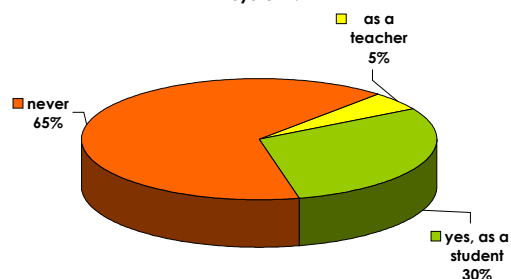
2. The results of ECOLOGICA project

Evaluation of the Ecologica e-learning education program by the participants

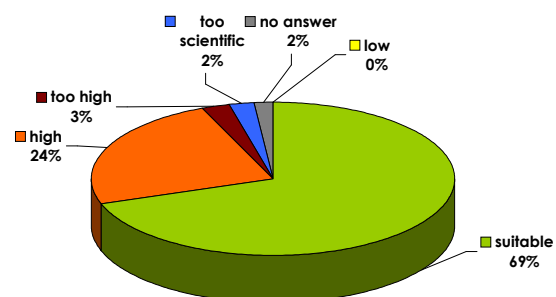
Figures show the statistical evaluation of participants feed back according to collected answers from questionnaires (n=247).



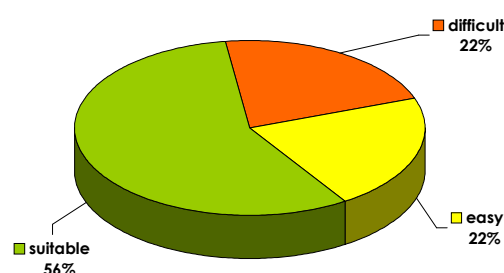
Already participated in e-learning education system?



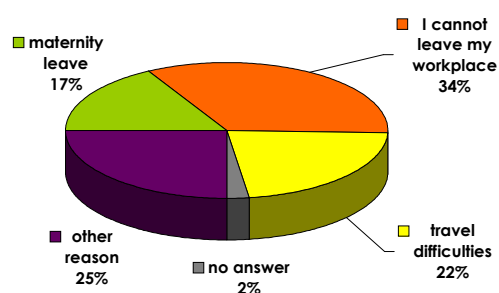
Level of educational materials were...



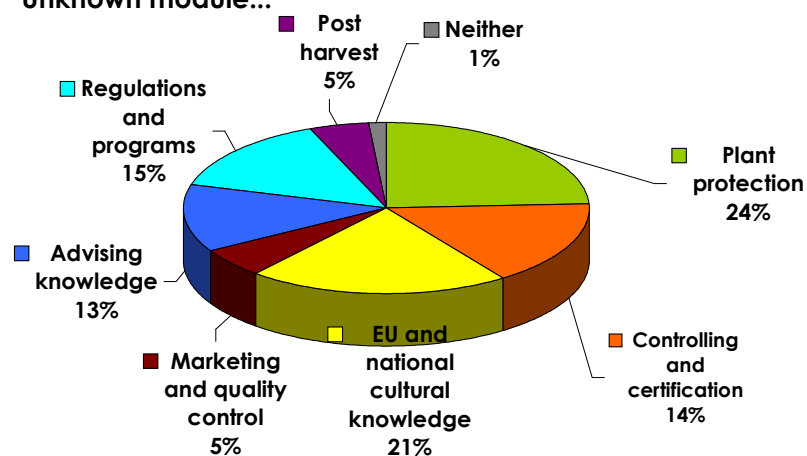
Learning from educational material was..



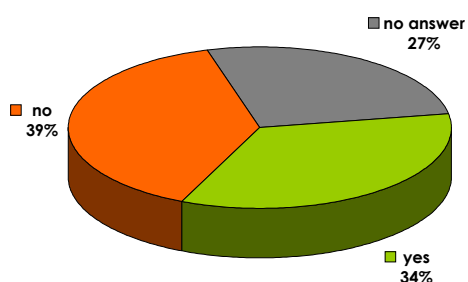
Choosing e-learning because of special living circumstances



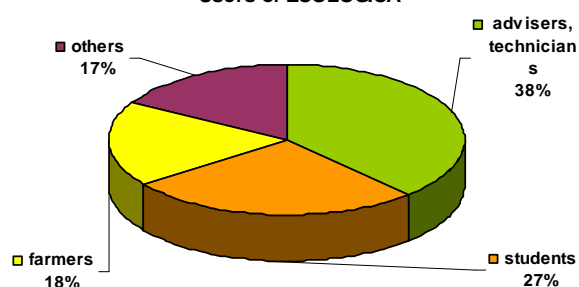
Unknown module...



Better chance to find a suitable job?



Users of ECOLOGICA





In the evaluation of the education program the satisfactory questionnaire had an important part, the comprehensive evaluation of the answers are below.

Majority of the participants already heard about e-learning and know what it means but only some of them tried it before.

- The number of modules was found mainly satisfactory.
- Generally, the participants were satisfied with the quality of the education materials.
- They found the whole structure of the program and the modules logical and satisfactory.
- There were new topics for almost everybody, at least one; concerning to EU and national cultural knowledge, known to the least extent.
- Significant part of the participants found the difficulty level of the tests appropriate.
- They find the learned materials useful to find new job (34%); it can help in their recent job (39%).
- Living conditions of the participants have inspired them to choose e-learning

Further Result of the ECOLOGICA Project

According to results of the participation feed back the quality of the criticized modules were modified, and the participants were informed from the website more detailed about the levels of the education programs. To receive the feed back from the participants of the courses via questionnaire is became an important element of the on line education programs in distance education. As a further result of the ECOLOGICA project the ECOLOGICA International Association had been established in 2007. as the organisation of the further developments of the project results on international level after the finalisation of the duration of the LdV project.

Literature:

- [1] Radics L. ed.: Ecological farming Course book for post secondary education. (with DVD) Szaktudás kiadó Ház Budapest, 2006. 263p
- [2] Tempus Foundation Leonardo da Vinci National Agency: Projects from the field of e-learning in Leonardo da Vinci program. Development of Central data bank on European level for the education of ecological farming advisers Disszeminációs füzetek 2007. 29p
- [3] L. Radics, Z. Szalai, P. Pusztai, A. Kormány, S. Basile, J. Moudry, M. Bavec, S. Globernik Mlakar, P.Toth, M. Tothova, A. Luik, A. Vetema, E.Selegovska:Dissemination brochure of Ecologica project HU/05/B/F/PP-170018. Grafica Press 2007. 142p
- [4] S. Basile L. Radics, Z. Szalai, P. Pusztai, A. Kormány, J. Moudry, M. Bavec, S. Globernik Mlakar, P.Toth, M. Tothova, A. Luik, A. Vetema, E.Selegovska: Ecologica EU project: Development of central data bank on European level for the education of ecological farming advisers. 16th IFOAM Conference Modena 2008. Book of Abstract 391p